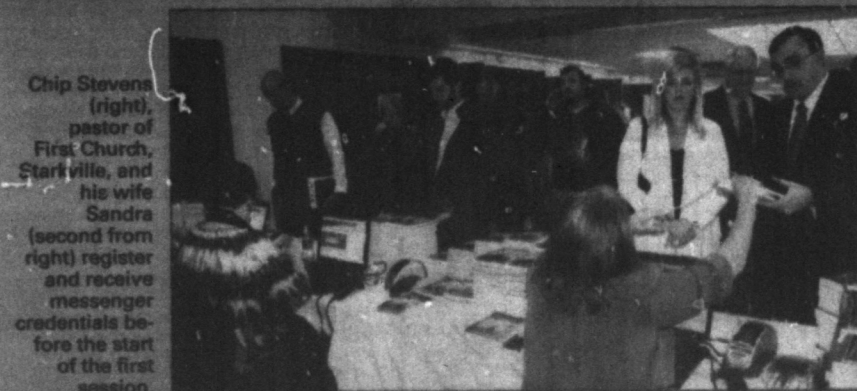


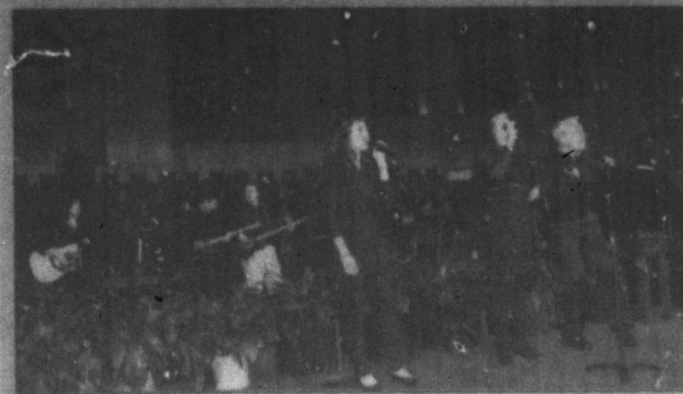
MBC IN SESSION



David Hamilton, president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention and pastor of West Heights Church, Pontotoc, gavels to order the 177th annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention in the Sanctuary of First Church, Jackson, on the morning of Oct. 30.



Chip Stevens (right), pastor of First Church, Starkville, and his wife Sandra (second from right) register and receive messenger credentials before the start of the first session.



The Praise Team from West Heights Church, Pontotoc, opens the first session with worship through music. Complete coverage of the annual meeting will be included in the issue of Nov. 8. (Photos by William H. Perkins Jr.)

LifeWay declines sale of Glorieta to Olivet University

NASHVILLE (BP) — LifeWay Christian Resources has "decided not to go forward" with the sale of its Glorieta, N.M., conference center to Olivet University, a San Francisco-based school which found itself in media crosshairs after the possible sale became public in July.

LifeWay, in announcing its decision Oct. 17, cited a LifeWay-initiated study by National Association of Evangelicals representatives. Olivet had agreed to the inquiry, which focused on the theological compatibility between LifeWay, a Southern Baptist entity based in Nashville, and Olivet, a school with ties to Korean Christian leader David Jang who has weathered heresy accusations in Asia.

Olivet, however, in a subsequent statement to the media, stated it plans to engage in "continuing negotiations" with LifeWay to purchase the 2,100-acre property near Santa Fe which, according to LifeWay, has operated at a loss for 24 of the past 25 years.

Neither LifeWay nor Olivet released the NAE report to Baptist Press.

The full text of LifeWay's announcement: "LifeWay Christian Resources has reviewed the report from the National Association of Evangelicals, and decided not to go forward with the sale of Glorieta Conference Center to Olivet University. We are appreciative of our relationship with Olivet's leadership, and indebted to NAE for their thorough work. We will now renew our pursuit of viable options for the sale of the property."

The full text of Olivet's response: "Olivet University leadership has been made aware that LifeWay Christian Resources plans not to proceed with the transfer of the Glorieta Conference Center. Olivet intends to further discuss the decision of LifeWay Christian Resources' leadership in moving forward and continuing negotiations in hopes an agreement can be reached regarding the purchase of the Glorieta Conference Center in Glorieta, N.M."

Earlier this year, LifeWay

offered to sell the conference center to the Baptist Convention of New Mexico (BCNM) for one dollar. Following a feasibility study, however, the state convention determined it would be too costly to renovate and maintain the property.

The executive director of the New Mexico convention, Joseph Bunce, declined comment on this latest development in LifeWay's effort to sell Glorieta, according to a BCNM spokesman.

The study of theological compatibility between LifeWay and Olivet primarily focused on accusations that Jang and/or his followers have promoted a heresy that Jang is the "second coming Christ." Jang has both defenders and critics regarding his Christian orthodoxy.

According to a LifeWay statement in July, any potential sale of Glorieta to Olivet, in addition to a "comprehensive review of the theological compatibility" between LifeWay and Olivet, would have included:

■ "Significant protections for individuals and churches that lease land from Glorieta

see Glorieta on p. 9

Inside

Direction	4
Sunday lessons	11
Editorial	2
Bibliography	7
How to	7
a Christi	7
Revivals	4
Howco	12
Just for	4
Classifieds	4

NOV 15 2012



From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

American Christians spoiled?

It's been stated many times and many ways in this column and in scores of other commentaries and publications: Christians in America are by and large the exception to the reality of 2,000 years of suffering and martyrdom for the followers of Jesus.

As we know from both secular and religious history, Christians have been persecuted from the beginnings of our faith. First generation Christians, including the apostles, were put to death in the most gruesome ways amid accusations against them that ranged from sedition to failing to worship Caesar to kidnapping and eating babies.

In programs designed to wipe out Christianity and too numerous through the years to count, believers have been framed for fires, floods, earthquakes, eclipses, epidemics, and plagues.

That persecution and martyrdom has carried through two millennia to modern times, where believers around the world are still routinely hounded and slain for their faith.

In southern Sudan, Christian parents have been slaughtered in front of their children, who are then sold into sexual slavery around the Arab world. In Nigeria, Islamist gunmen roamed the halls of a college dorm and executed at least 30 students they believed to be Christians. More than 12,000 people have disappeared and are presumed to be refugees in the Indian state of Orissa, where Hindu radicals have vowed to wipe out Christianity.

In Gorja, Pakistan, Muslims rioted after rumors spread of blasphemy against the Koran among the Christian populace, resulting in the deaths of many men, women, and children, and the burning of their homes. Well-armed Druse militia in Syria are even now using the civil war in that country as cover to murder Christians en masse and burn down entire villages where they lived.

It's hard for American Chris-

tians to grasp those events, because we live in a secure homeland where the biggest problem we have is whether we're going to be able to get the latest and most stylish cell phone before all our friends get theirs. We live in a country where freedom is enshrined in our founding documents, and we have the military and economic power to back it up.

In simple terms, we're spoiled. American Christians are so spoiled that vast numbers of us don't even make the effort to keep this country the land of the free. We don't vote.

We don't vote, and the secular interests get their way. They dominate us at the ballot box, and then they dominate us on social and religious issues. We don't vote, and anti-Christian forces are able to keep high-school cheerleaders in Texas from painting Bible verses on posters. We don't vote, and a valedictorian in Nevada has her microphone cut off at graduation when she refuses to remove Jesus from her speech.

We don't vote, and another million babies are destroyed before their first breaths are drawn. We don't vote, and legislation is passed to legalize suicide. We don't vote, and programs are proposed to euthanize the elderly and the sick. We don't vote, and personhood amendments are defeated.

If Christians only voted, our sheer numbers could turn around this country and redirect America from the path of destruction it is surely traveling. If Christians only voted, people who shouldn't be holding office, wouldn't be. If Christians only voted, God and his Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, could be openly worshipped and glorified in the marketplace, in the public square, and in our schools.

If Christians only voted. If we don't, we should prepare ourselves for what we surely have coming to us. That's not doom-day hysteria. That's the reality of today in America.

Deciding our destination

Very soon the United States will be voting in one of the most important presidential elections we have ever had. In and out of Southern Baptist life, Christians across America are praying about this election and calling others to pray.

Our instinctive expectation when we pray is for God to intervene in the circumstances and situations we bring before His throne. It is proper and appropriate to expect God to respond when we pray. We must never forget that He responds in the way He deems best, and that His response may often be different than our desires. Whatever God's response, the act of prayer is itself a pathway to joy.

Prayer is a petition we present before God — never directions we give to God. However, knowing that every time we pray in accordance with biblical guidelines, God does hear and does respond, is a promise that should bring joy to the heart of every believer.

Prayer becomes our passage into a front row seat to see God at work. It is our assurance that we are living in His grip and are a part of His unfolding purposes. Christians with the habit of prayer tend to be Christians who live with a deeply rooted sense of joy growing from their certainty about God's presence and work in their lives.

Let's dig a little deeper into why we can experience joy as a fruit of our prayers.

■ The first way a Christian learns to pray is praying as an expression of need to the Lord who loves us and gave Himself for us. The Gospel tells of our sin and the sacrifice Jesus made to save us. If He would do that, He would surely hear my cry for help. If He will provide forgiveness and eternal life, surely He will provide present help.

Praying for His intervention on the basis of His provision for our salvation becomes a vivid reminder of how He feels about us. Prayer is in effect a tutorial reminding us of why we can have confidence in the Lord and what His presence in our lives means. When the Gospel story drives your prayers, it drives you to joy.



Guest opinion
with Chuck Kelley

■ The second way a Christian learns to pray is by praying for the needs of others. Someone once defined evangelism as "one beggar telling another beggar where to get food." Our encounter with Christ reveals His love for us. Our walk with Christ makes clear His love for others. The Gospel is bigger than me. The Gospel is for the whole world. As John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The better you know the Gospel, the more you understand the love of God is deep enough and wide enough to embrace all who turn to Jesus in faith.

The Apostle Andrew was always bringing others to Jesus because He knew that Jesus cared about them, too. Imagine his joy as he watched Jesus embrace those he brought with the same love he experienced.

Knowing the Gospel is for the whole world drives us to pray for the needs of others with as much passion as we pray for our own needs. Seeing God work in ever-wider circles multiplies the joy of seeing Him work in us.

■ The third way a Christian learns to pray is by praying for the purposes of God to be fulfilled. Children know their parents love them, but they do not understand the depth of that love. As they grow and mature, they realize more and more the distinctive, sacrificial love that drove every loving act of their parents. Things their parents did and decisions their parents made look different when they realize those decisions were driven by love. As adults with children themselves, those kids are often surprised

see Kelley on p. 9

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New Orleans Seminary opens Bible, archaeology museum

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — New Orleans Seminary's new Bible and archaeology museum occupies a small space but heralds the powerful, timeless message of the Bible being handed down and preserved through the centuries.

The exhibit, *From Papyrus to Print: A Journey through the History of the Bible*, explores how the Bible was written on papyrus and parchment, copied, preserved and ultimately printed in the language of common people. Ancient archaeological artifacts supplement the experience by offering a glimpse into daily life in biblical times.

"Part of the wonder of our Bible is that we have a long-term history over which it was written as well as when it was copied and printed," said Bill Warren, director of the Haggard Center for New Testament Textual Studies at New Orleans Seminary.

"When we pick up a Bible, we ought to have a sense of appreciation for the history behind it. It's not just another book. It is a God-inspired book. It is a book that many have struggled with their very lives just so we can have copies. It may seem low priced to us, but the real price is in the story."

The museum, which opened in September, is the partial fulfillment of a decade-long dream. Before Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005, seminary trustees approved the construction of a new campus library. The proposed library included plans for two state-of-the-art museum and research areas, one for the Haggard Center and one for the seminary's Center for Archaeological Research (CAR).

Following Katrina, campus restoration efforts and new housing took priority over the proposed library. Warren, along with Dennis Cole and Jim Parker, co-directors of CAR, kept the museum idea alive by merging the two concepts into one.

For last spring's New Orleans Seminary Foundation Board meeting, Warren and Cole developed a temporary display in the John T. Christian Library. The display was a success, and when space adjacent to Haggard Center's office in the Hardin Student Center became available, locating the Bible and archaeology museum there seemed perfect.

The central museum exhibit, *From Papyrus to Print*, tracks the transmission of the Bible, beginning with papyrus and ending with press-printed Bibles. The first display shows how papyrus was made and how ancient papyrus fragments look when they are discovered.

Old Testament Display

The second section of the museum focuses on the Old Testament. Four Hebrew scrolls illustrate the use of real parchment (animal skin) as an early medium for manuscripts. The focal point of this section is the 400-year-



HISTORY EXPLAINED — Katie Unsworth (right), a New Orleans Seminary student, leads a tour of the seminary's new Bible and archaeology museum for Stephon Daniels (left), and Dave Bolin of Gadsden, Al. (BP photo)

old complete Esther scroll. Three other scroll portions date to the 1800s.

In addition to the original manuscripts, the museum uses professional-quality facsimile editions of important manuscripts. Facsimile copies utilize high-resolution, full color photographs of each page of the original document, preserving details and characteristics of the ancient manuscript.

The Hebrew section features facsimiles of the two leading Hebrew manuscripts that serve as the basis for the Old Testament text in modern Bible translations.

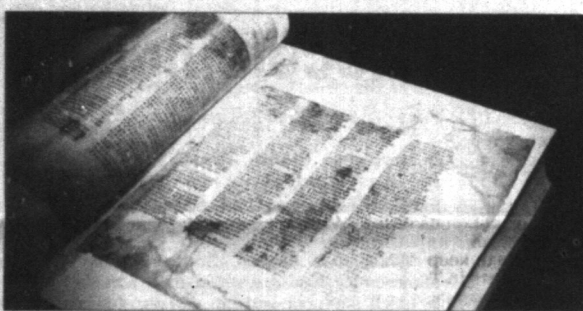
Greek Display

The third section, which focuses on the Greek Old and New Testament manuscripts, includes facsimiles of five major codices. The focal point of the Greek section is the *Codex Vaticanus* facsimile donated by Mary Wheeler Messer and her late husband, Thomas Messer Sr.

This codex, dating to the early fourth century and kept at the Vatican, is one of the oldest and most complete manuscripts of the Old and New Testament Greek Bible. Rather than using photographs, the *Codex Vaticanus* facsimile recreates the color, texture and imperfections of the original parchment with stunning detail, including the irregular shape and the imperfections of the original pages. Even the holes, stains, and wrinkles are replicated.

The Greek section also includes a facsimile of the oldest complete Greek New Testament, *Codex Sinaiticus*, which dates to the mid-300s, and a facsimile of *Codex Bezae*, a fifth century Greek-Latin codex of the Gospels and Acts.

The archaeology section is located in the center of the museum



BIBLE ON DISPLAY — A high-resolution facsimile copy of the Greek New Testament manuscript, *Codex Sinaiticus*, was donated to New Orleans Seminary's Bible and archaeology museum by Milburn and Nancy Calhoun. The original manuscript, dating to the mid-300s, is the oldest and most complete New Testament manuscript available. (BP photo)



ANCIENT RECORD KEEPING — Bearing an eerie resemblance to modern laptop and tablet computers, ancient clay tablets inscribed with Akkadian cuneiform writing were used for keeping records of transactions or contracts. The tablets are on display at New Orleans Seminary's Bible and archaeology museum. (BP photo)

space adjacent to the Greek section, and includes a wide range of objects such as Chalcolithic period cups dating to 3,500 B.C., and Byzantine period jugs and storage jars dating to 500 A.D.

Holdings include zoomorphic vessels, clay tablets inscribed with cuneiform writing, Roman glass, and numerous clay vessels for cooking and storage.

According to Cole, the museum

captures the "everyday stuff of life from any given period. It gives you an idea of the types of things that were used, from your soup or stew bowl to your drinking cup to storage pottery. It gives you that visual representation of what it was like in biblical times."

Two highlights among the artifacts are a clay household idol, reminiscent of the Genesis 31 story of Rachel stealing her father's household idols, and an exceptional Late Bronze Age (1450-1250 B.C.) Cypriot "milk ware" bowl, illustrating the nature of early Mediterranean commerce.

The bowls were crafted on the island of Cyprus and exported to places throughout the region, including Canaan. The New Orleans Seminary archaeology team excavating the ancient water system in Gezer, Israel, uncovered numerous "milk ware" shards.

Latin Section

The Latin section of the museum focuses on the emergence of Latin as the church's most common language. The section also marks the development of the printing press which revolutionized the distribution of Scripture.

Handwritten manuscripts from this time period often featured "illuminations," colored drawings and ornaments along with the text. Warren calls the illuminated manuscript "the multimedia of its day."

The museum features two illuminated pages from 12th and 14th century Latin Psalters. The highlight in the Latin section is an original page from the Gutenberg Bible, the first Bible printed for mass distribution.

Early English Bibles

The last section of the museum focuses on early English Bibles, highlighted by the Geneva Bible (1562) and the 1617 edition of the King James Bible, its third printing.

According to Warren, part of the wonder of the Bible is the great price so many have paid to ensure that people have access to God's Word in their own language. "It wasn't simply a heavy financial price, although *Codex Sinaiticus* for example, probably would have been 15-to-20 years worth of wages for the average person. The heavy price was paid by the loss of eyesight on the part of scribes. It was paid by some who literally gave their lives to defend the copies during times of persecution."

"Others were killed simply for translating the Bible into the language of the common people. William Tyndale died for his role in translating the Bible into English."

The museum will be open during regular New Orleans Seminary office hours, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday - Friday, with trained guides available.

The title of this article has nothing to do with many of you, and I can assure you it does not have anything to do with me. For I am confident that many of you would join with me in saying, "I glory in the cross of the Lord Jesus." Yet over the past few weeks it has been interesting to watch as the cross has been in the news because it is a problem to people. Let me share with you just three quick news items about the cross that have caught my attention.

The first event took place in activities around the 911 remembrances in New York. You may recall that in all of the destruction and the debris after the fall of the Twin Towers on 9-11-2001 there emerged huge steel beams that literally formed a cross. In the midst of all of the tragedy, loss, and heartbreak thousands, if not millions, of people saw the cross that became a huge piece of art. It was to many people a tremendous blessing and a kind of God provided inspirational moment. It was a visual that would encourage families in their darkest days. It has become a part of the 911 Memorial. This year a group of atheists brought suit against the people who were in charge of the memorial and wanted the cross taken down. One of the people bringing the suit was interviewed and said, "The cross makes me sick!"

The second incident was the ACLU bringing suit to have a 30-foot high cross taken down. The cross has been there since just after World War II. It was in remembrance of all of those people



Directions

With Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

The Problem with the Cross

who gave their lives in the Great War. Now for over a half century it has been a reminder to everyone who comes to visit of the sacrifice that had been given by those men and women as well as the supreme sacrifice made for all of us. Because it is a religious symbol the ACLU felt like it needed to be destroyed. It stands on public grounds.

The third cross issue involves some students at LSU. A Christian group of students got all decked out with their purple and gold, painted their faces, and all of the other stuff that goes with it, and pulled for the Tigers. One of the things this wild and wooly bunch did was to paint a cross on their foreheads or faces.

The school was using some of the pictures of this group that cheered on their team; and they did some photo chopping. They took the crosses off of the pictures. When asked why they did that their response was, "We did not want to offend anyone."

These three incidents bring into focus a real question as to why that place and that event where God demonstrated His greatest love toward mankind to save him, pay for his sin debt, and give him life everlasting has become such an object of offense. When you look at the cross wherever it may be found it literally is an emblem of our sinful nature and failure and God's goodness to reclaim us. From the very first sin among mankind until today, people do

not want to be reminded of their disobedience to God and their rebellious spirit.

When that first sin took place Adam and Eve went running. They were afraid and hid from God. While that is an impossible thing they thought they could. But then God called to them, "Adam, where art thou?" God who will intervene and provide a sin covering reached out to Adam and Eve at the cross and to you and to me. The problem that Adam and Eve had is the problem that we have. God is not the problem. The cross is not the problem. Our sin is the problem, and we do not want to look at our sinfulness and our separation from God. So as the atheist said, "That cross makes me sick!" As the public relations people at the school said, "We don't want to offend anyone." So let's just do this. Let's take the cross down from the Memorial Gardens, remove the cross that is the reminder of the sacrifices of soldiers, and we will just airbrush the cross off of the faces of the students.

Sadly, sometimes people want to stop singing about the cross, preaching about the cross, or simply sharing their testimony with someone that the cross is where Jesus died and it is where we can live. It is the most glorious spot and time in human events when God Almighty gave His only begotten Son so that we, the rebellious children of God, could be bought, restored, rescued, renewed, and saved by the cross.

The author can be contacted at
jfutral@mbcb.org.

Revivals & Homecomings

► **First Church, Oloah, Sumrall**, celebrated its 110 year homecoming with a groundbreaking ceremony of their new fellowship hall, replacing the one that burned down Nov., 2010.

► **First Church, Itta Bena**: Homecoming, Nov. 4; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Higdon Herrington, speaker; Sandy Land, music.

► **Oak Hill Church, Booneville**: 125th Anniversary, Nov. 4; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish luncheon; Jim

Futral, speaker; Brad Ball, pastor.

► **Horseshoe Church, Tchula**: 70th anniversary and Homecoming, Nov. 4; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Rob Futral, speaker; Delta Sound, music.

► **White Oak Church, Smith County**: 170th homecoming, Nov. 4; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch, afternoon worship, and cemetery association meeting; Tim Robertson, speaker; Elaine Yates, music.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital

photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either e-mail, CD or DVD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefit and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

MS POSITIONS

GASTON BAPTIST CHURCH, BOONEVILLE IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF MUSIC AND EDUCATION. Resumes can be sent by email to office@gastonbaptist-church.com or by mail to Gaston Baptist Church in care of Staff Search Committee, 1908 Gaston Road, Booneville, MS 38829. Job description available.

PINE GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL "ASSOCIATE PASTOR YOUTH MINISTER". Please send resume to Pine Grove Baptist Church, 124 Gather Johnson Rd., Magee, MS 39111.

GUNTER ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH, FLORENCE, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR. Please send resumes to guntzroad@msnet.com. If mailing please send to 2240 Almer Rd. Florence, Ms. 39073 Attn: Mrs. Allen

UNITY BAPTIST CHURCH, MOSELLE, MS IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A FULL TIME PASTOR. Please mail resumes to Unity Baptist Church, P. O. Box 156, Moselle, MS 39459, Attention: Pastor Search Committee.

AIRPORT BAPTIST CHURCH, GRENADA, MS, SEEKING PASTOR, MAY BE BI-VOCATIONAL. Send Resume to Leon Kennedy, Pastor Search Committee at: 1578 Fairground Road, Grenada, MS 38901, Phone # 662-226-0682.

HEBRON BAPTIST CHURCH IN MERIDIAN, MS, IS LOOKING FOR A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC/WORSHIP LEADER AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY. Will be responsible for Sunday morning and evening worship. If interested, please email a resume to hebronbaptist@bellsouth.net or mail to Music Search Committee, 4795 Virville Causeway Rd, Meridian, MS, 39301.

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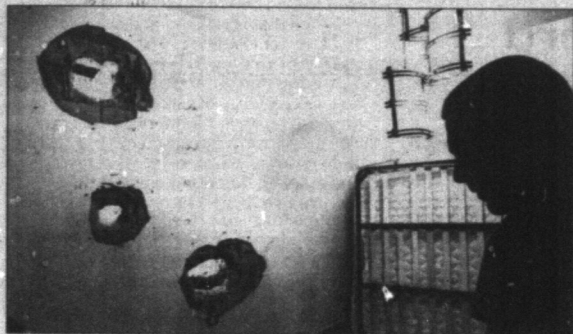
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BOMB BLAST — Charles Aboud inspects gaping holes from shrapnel that pierced his bedroom wall near the site of a car bomb that killed a top Lebanese intelligence officer and injured scores of bystanders in Beirut. (BP photo)

Lebanon's shaky peace in question after massive car bombing kills nine

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP) — Drops of dried blood lead like bread crumbs up three flights of stairs to a shrapnel-shredded apartment, perhaps 40 yards from the site of an Oct. 19 car bombing that killed Lebanon's top intelligence chief and threatened to destroy the country's shaky stability.

The Beirut apartment belongs to a friendly Maronite Catholic named Aboud who lives with his adult son Charles. Three days after the bombing, they offer figs to visitors along with a tour of their damaged home: gaping holes left in a bedroom wall by metal fragments from the explosion, broken windows, door frames blown inward by the blast.

Pictures of Maronite Catholic saints on the walls remain unharmed, which Aboud regards as a miracle.

Their pockmarked verandah offers a clear view of the crater left by the car bomb in Beirut's Ashrafieh district. A few blackened husks of cars lie nearby. The side street where the attack occurred sits silent, sealed off and guarded by Lebanese soldiers and police.

On other streets in the area, however, the bustle already has returned. People come and go, drink coffee in cafes, sweep up broken glass and debris from the blast into small mountains for removal. For their part, Aboud and Charles are thankful to be unhurt, unlike others in their building injured by shattering glass and shrapnel. They say it's time to get back to normal life — or what passes for normal in Beirut's cauldron of contending religious sects and armed political groups.

"Welcome to Lebanon," Charles says with a wry grin.

The Lebanese version of normal might not return so quickly this time, or return at all.

"Times are very tense here," says a veteran Christian worker and observer of Lebanon's political scene. "Some are comparing it to times near the end of [Leba-

non's] civil war in the late 1980s.

"Only God knows which way things will turn, but the whole Middle East is changing faster than we could ever imagine. I think many people here feel that things internally are continuing to worsen and that the strife going on next door is coming here in increasing measure."

Next door is Syria, where full-scale civil war is tearing that country apart, sending thousands of refugees fleeing into Lebanon and other neighboring nations. Syria occupied much of Lebanon for years and continues to influence events there.

Some of the same ethnic and religious factions battling for control of Syria maintain an increasingly uneasy truce in Lebanon, particularly Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims. Many Lebanese Sunnis have backed Syria's primarily Sunni rebels; many Lebanese Shi'ites support the Syrian regime led by Bashar al-Assad of the Alawite sect in Syria that is distantly related to Shia Islam.

The Alawite sect rules a Sunni majority there and is supported by Iran and Hezbollah, the powerful Lebanon-based Shi'ite group that fought Israel to a truce in 2006.

Hezbollah reportedly has sent fighters into Syria to support Bashar al-Assad's embattled regime. Several Sunni Arab nations are openly or covertly aiding rebel forces.

Many Lebanese immediately blamed Syria for planting the Oct. 19 car bomb that killed at least nine people, including General Wissam al-Hassan, Lebanon's intelligence chief and an outspoken foe of Syria's regime. Scores of people were injured in the blast, which occurred in the busy Ashrafieh district of Beirut just as children were returning home from school.

Syrian officials denied involvement and condemned the attack. Lebanese Sunnis were unconvinced by their claims of innocence.

China tortures, imprisons church starter for distribution of Bibles

DALLAS (BP) — Shi Weihan dangled from a wall inside a Chinese prison, handcuffed to a hook, as his interrogators doused him with frigid water and tormented him with electric shocks. They pried for information: How many Christian books did he give out? What are the names and phone numbers of the pastors he gave them to?

"During that time, the outside world did not know what was happening to me," he said, but Weihan would not remain anonymous for long.

His imprisonment under the Chinese government's religious crackdown — reported extensively by Baptist Press — would carry him into national publications and be chronicled in detail by the religious freedom monitor ChinaAid.

Weihan's journey into the ranks of the persecuted faithful began decades ago with no faith at all. "Growing up in a communist country, I didn't believe in God in that time," Weihan said over the course of several interviews with Baptist Press in October. "I thought it was like a story, not true."

In 1990, a Chinese man named Joshua brought Weihan and his wife Zhang Jing together and gave a Bible to each of them. "He told me, 'This book is very good. You take it home to look at it,'" Weihan recounted. "Because he was a new believer, he didn't know how to preach Gospel, but he told me, 'It's good. You need a Bible. You need the Gospel.'"

Five years later, at a Christmas party hosted by Joshua, Weihan and his wife placed their faith in Jesus and were baptized the following year. Over the next decade, Weihan founded a house church called Antioch Victory Church and started the Holy Spirit Trading Co., a Christian publishing house. His company worked to translate Christian books into Chinese and also sold Christian literature with government permission.

The lack of Christian books and Bibles among many Christians spurred Weihan to give them away to believers across China, without government authorization. "In America, you can go to a bookstore and find many Christian books, and you can buy a Bible from Walmart," he said, "but in China, you can't find a Bible in a typical bookstore or market. It's not legal."

Giving away the books was risky. A Chinese Christian was sentenced to two years in prison for merely receiving three unauthorized Christian books.

"But our people need the teaching from God," Weihan said. "They need God's Word."

In the early morning hours of Nov. 28, 2007, about 30 po-



JAILED FOR FAITH — Shi Weihan speaks with his wife from inside Beijing's Haidian Detention Center, where he spent most of his three years in prison and under torture for giving out Christian books and Bibles without government authorization. (BP photo)

lice officers swarmed Weihan's home and hauled him away, also raiding the Holy Spirit Trading Co. The police tortured Weihan as they demanded to know how many books he gave out, the identities of pastors, and where he preached the Gospel.

"In that time, I prayed to God, 'I didn't do anything wrong. I'm trying to preach the Gospel. I don't want to do something wrong to my government,'" Weihan recalled.

Police also arrested his wife in front of their daughters, Grace and Lilly. Zhang was released after questioning, but police also took Weihan's younger brother and his wife into custody. Weihan said the police tortured his brother so severely that they caused kidney damage.

Weihan was charged with illegal printing and distribution of Christian literature, but by this time his case had garnered international attention. News of his arrest landed in USA Today, placing an unwelcome spotlight on China as it tried to convince the world ahead of the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing that it protects religious freedom.

Weihan was released on bail in January 2008 after authorities said there wasn't enough evidence to proceed with the charges, but three policemen kept tabs on him 24 hours a day. "When we went to my father's home to have dinner, people followed us," Weihan said. "When we went to a friend's home, they followed us too. When we went to the market, they followed us — everywhere."

On March 19, 2008, authorities arrested Weihan once again, charging him with being a "dangerous religious element." Al-

lowed very little communication with his family or attorney, he was forced to sign a confession that he printed and distributed illegal publications.

Prison officials initially denied Weihan medication for his diabetes, which Open Doors News (formerly Compass Direct News) said caused severe weight loss that rendered him "unrecognizable."

On June 10, 2009, Weihan was sentenced to three years in prison and fined \$22,000 for illegal business practices. He said his attorney was under house arrest and could not attend the court session. The sentence included time served since his first arrest, meaning he would have to spend the next year and a half in prison.

"I was not surprised that I was arrested and put in jail, because in Bible times, Jesus was tortured," Weihan said through his daughter Lilly's translation.

During his time in prison, he shared cells with as many as 30 other people, some of them murderers. "The people in there have no hope," he said. "They are just waiting to die."

Weihan gave them the hope of Jesus, preaching the Gospel to his cellmates and baptizing everyone who believed. "I told them that Jesus can give them new life," he said.

He also preached to the guards, some of whom turned to Jesus in faith. When Weihan asked for a Bible, a guard gave him one that had been confiscated from a prisoner, and Weihan started a Bible study in his cell.

"China isn't like America," he said through Lilly. "You can't do prison ministry. Somebody has to actually become a prisoner to preach to them."

Just for the Record



SPRINGFIELD CHURCH, MORTON, recently ordained Ronald Wade as deacon. Shown are Aline Wade, Wade, and Daniel Napp.



The Crystal Ridge Singers of **CRYSTAL RIDGE CHURCH, LOUISVILLE**, celebrated their 30 year anniversary with a gospel singing at the church Sept. 30. Shown, front, are Sheila Fleming and Minnie Hudspeth; back, Carolyn Hisaw, Donnie Hisaw, and Carol Pugh.

CHILDREN FROM BRANCH CHURCH, MORTON, attended Scott County's Children's Ministry Day at North Morton Church. Shown, back, are Kaitlyn Scales, Destiny Mocre, Hunter Ragan, and Michael Ray Latham; front, Logan Lee Phillipson, Vaden Latham, and Brady Phillipson.



TRINITY CHURCH, FULTON, ordained Kevin Brown as deacon Sept. 16. Shown are Brown and pastor Don Baggett.



FIRST CHURCH, TUPELO, held a deacon ordination service Oct. 7. Shown are Brian Alexander, Fredrick Flatt, Joshua Phillip West, Scott Emision, Phillip Poe, and pastor Chad Grayson.



SHILOH CHURCH, SONTAG, ordained Luke Martin to the gospel ministry Oct. 14. Shown are pastor Andy Fullington with Martin and his family - Melanie, Roy, Grace, Hannah, and Chloe Martin.



Members from **STEEP HOLLOW CHURCH, POPLARVILLE**, celebrated Old Fashion Day Oct. 21.

BIBL i O C I P H E R

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TYN CR Y PCCN ZCTEZOSTZS, YTN CR

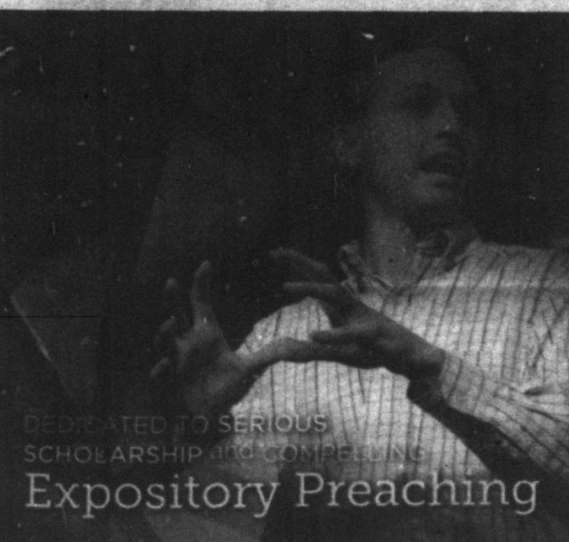
RYOHL ITRSOPTSN.

ROAEH HOFCHLW CTS: ROGS

Clue: Z = C

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Jude Twenty-One

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005



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College News



Bob Blevins, director of facilities, grounds, and maintenance at **WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY**, Patrick Earley, a senior from Raceland, La., and president of Student Government Association (SGA), Danza Thomason, a junior from West Point, Brenda Waldrip, assistant professor of education and vice president of student services, Valerie Bridgeforth, administrative director of housing, Kevin Lewis, architect with Landry and Lewis Architects, Sean Sumrall, contractor with Larry J. Sumrall Contractors, Hugh Dickens, chairman of the university's Board of Trustees, and Tommy King, president of WCU, turn the shovels during the groundbreaking ceremony for the new women's residence hall at WCU on October 17.

In other College News:

► The **Blue Mountain College** Chorale, under the direction of Greg Long, will join with guest artists and area singers on Nov. 3 to present Handel's Messiah at 7 p.m. in the auditorium of the administration building. Admission is free.

Staff Changes



CALVARY CHURCH, HATTIESBURG, has called J.J. Holland as minister of preschool/children.



CEDAR GROVE CHURCH, COLUMBIA, has called Todd Sumrall as pastor, shown with his wife, Tammy, and children Wesley and Lindsey.

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

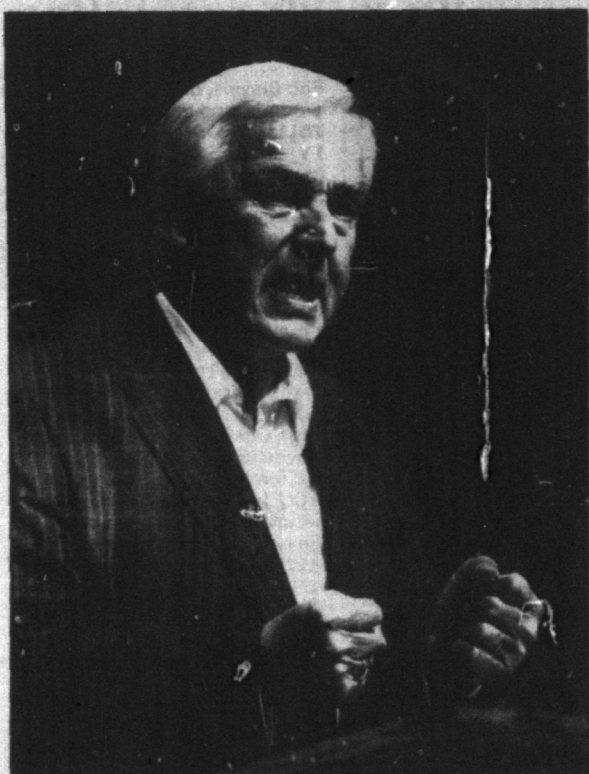
Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name. (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



VOTING VALUES — David Jeremiah, pastor of Shadow Mountain Church in El Cajon, Ca., radio host, and author of multiple books, has released a video appealing to Christians to vote their values when they go to the polls on Nov. 6. (BP photo)

Jeremiah urges Christians to vote according to their values

EL CAJON, Calif. (BP and local reports) — Author and pastor David Jeremiah has recorded a video urging Christians not to vote according to their political party but to vote according to their values.

In the six-minute video, the senior pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon, Ca., urges Christians to pray for the nation and to vote.

"As Christians, the Bible tells us that we are to be salt and light in the world, and the time has come for us to let our voices be heard and our votes be counted," Jeremiah says, "and this time when you vote, don't vote your geographical location. Don't vote your religious denomination. Don't vote your political affiliation. Don't vote your racial identification. Don't even vote your union obligation."

"This time when you vote, vote your values. Vote your beliefs. Vote your convictions, and if candidates want your vote, let them earn it the old fashioned way. Let them make commitments to your values, and let them know that you intend to hold them responsible."

"As Christians, the Bible tells us that we are to be salt and light in the world, and the time has come for us to let our voices be heard and our votes be counted."

David Jeremiah
pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church

Jeremiah is a popular speaker in Mississippi, and has preached at the annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

America "seems to have lost her way," Jeremiah asserts in the video, adding, "Spiritually, we have marginalized the Bible. We've trivialized marriage, and we've neutralized the church. America today is in great turmoil. It feels like the soul of our nation has been taken from us."

Christians, he says, "are fully aware of the precarious situation in which we find ourselves: economically, spiritually, and politically," and yet "we feel rather powerless to do

anything about it."

He adds, "We are not helpless," and points to two action Christians can take — pray, and vote.

"The Old Testament teaches us that if we humble ourselves and pray, God will hear from heaven and heal our land," Jeremiah says. "The New Testament assures us that the fervent prayers of righteous men can make a difference."

Voting, Jeremiah says, is an obligation. "In the last election, less than half of those who were eligible to vote were registered and of those who did register, less than half of them actually went to the polls and voted. Our young men and women give their limbs and their lives to ensure our freedom, and we don't even trouble ourselves to vote. No wonder we are in the mess we are in."

Jeremiah closes by telling viewers, "I have been asked this question over and over again: 'Dr. Jeremiah, do you think God is finished with America?' but that is the wrong question. The right question is, 'Is America finished with God?'"

First person: Pastor's five most difficult challenges

By Thom S. Rainer
Correspondent

Serving as a pastor may be one of the most difficult jobs in the world. Indeed, it may be an impossible job to do in our own strength. I know. Before I was LifeWay's president or a seminary dean, I served as pastor of four churches.

I have heard from countless pastors in countless churches. Their stories are similar to mine, so I asked the question: What specific part of being a pastor is the most difficult for you? Let's look at five tough challenges for pastors:



RAINER

■ Responding graciously to someone right before you preach.

The pastor has put hours into the sermon. He has prayed for God's power for that moment. He is focused on God's Word and its proclamation. All of his energy is devoted to the upcoming moment. Then someone rushes up to him with a piece of paper and says, "Pastor, you need to announce about the

garage sale we're having this week."

Most of the times I showed grace. A few times I did not and showed something else.

■ Knowing what to do with a staff member who is not making a vital contribution to the church.

Many churches will not let leaders make the tough decision of letting a staff member go, even if he is not really productive and obviously an ill fit for the ministry and the church. Such a move is considered "un-Christian" and will not be tolerated, even if it would ultimately be best for that staff member.

Many pastors have lost their own jobs when they made such a move, so we often move those persons to innocuous, low-accountability positions even though we know it is poor stewardship.

■ Loving a person in the church when that person is your critic.

We want to be Christ-like, and love people unconditionally. I admit that I often saw those

people through their critical words instead of seeing them through the eyes of Christ.

■ Preparing more than one quality sermon a week.

When I was a pastor I had to prepare a Sunday morning sermon, a Sunday evening sermon, and a Wednesday evening Bible message. Frankly, it took all I had to prepare one good message.

I know many churches no longer have the Sunday evening preaching service, but tens of thousands of pastors still prepare more than one message a week.

■ Doing the funeral of a person who was not a Christian.

We can always hope the person had a deathbed conversion of which we are not aware and we can always preach messages of comfort to the family and friends, but it is extremely difficult to talk about the deceased if he or she was lost.

Pastors, what wisdom can you share with other pastors regarding these challenges? Laypersons, what can you or your church do to support these pastors?

Rainer is president of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention,

headquartered in Nashville. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

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Survey: Obedience can be a sticking point for many Christians

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Making personal, sacrificial decisions in order to better obey Christ is a key attribute to an individual's spiritual growth, according to a survey of American churchgoers by LifeWay Research, a division of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville.

Yet, the study also found less than one-third of churchgoers strongly agree they are following through in specific aspects of obedience.

"Obeying God and Denying Self" is one of eight attributes of discipleship identified in the Transformational Discipleship study conducted by LifeWay Research. Each of the eight attributes consistently shows up in the lives of believers who are progressing in spiritual maturity.

The study produced the Transformational Discipleship Assessment, which measures an individual's spiritual growth in each of the eight areas of development.

Scott McConnell, director of LifeWay Research, said the Obeying God and Denying Self attribute "does not measure a specific list of sins to avoid. Rather, it gauges whether an individual has an obedient posture."

"When it comes to obedience, a spiritually mature disciple of Christ has a loving motivation to obey God, the self-awareness to know they must be proactive to avoid bad decisions and the humility to confess sins they commit."

The survey reveals 64% of

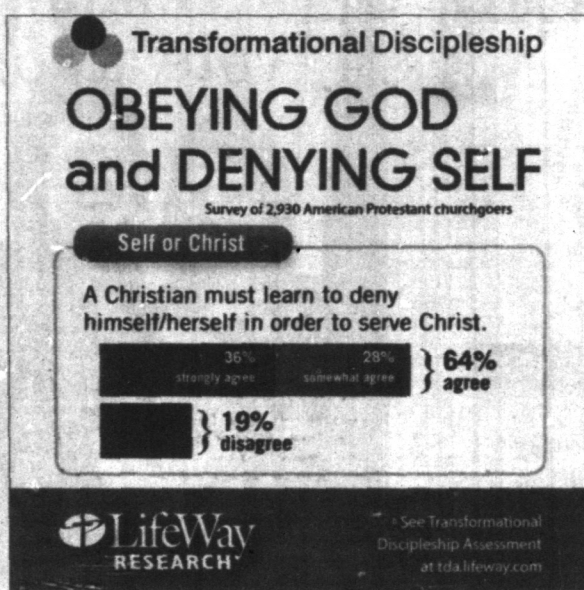
churchgoers agree with the statement, "A Christian must learn to deny himself/herself in order to serve Christ." Nineteen percent disagree with the statement.

"Obeying God is only easy when a person's own desires match God's," McConnell said. "Until believers have the same mind as Christ, denying their own natural desires will be hard."

The survey measures confession of sins and asking God for forgiveness as one component of the Obeying God and Denying Self attribute. When asked how often, if at all, they personally "confess ... sins and wrongdoings to God and ask for forgiveness," 39% indicate every day and 27% say at least a few times a week. Eight percent of respondents say they rarely or never confess sins and wrongdoings to God and ask forgiveness.

Sin was not only addressed after the fact. The survey also asked individual churchgoers how proactive they are in avoiding sin with the statement: "I try to avoid situations in which I might be tempted to think or do immoral things." Three-fourths agree with the statement, but only 32% strongly agree. Eleven percent disagree, and 16% responded indifferently.

The survey also examined an individual's inclination to adjust their attitude through the statement: "When I realize my attitude does not please God, I take steps to try to fix it." More than 80% agree with the state-



ment, but only 32% strongly agree. Fifteen percent neither agree nor disagree, and four percent disagree.

The survey also reveals other actions that can positively impact the scores of individuals on the Obeying God and Denying Self attribute:

- Attending a worship service.
- Making a decision to obey or follow God with an awareness that choosing His way may in some way be costly.
- Being disciplined or mentored one-on-one by a more spiritually mature Christian.

■ Reading the Bible or a book about what is in the Bible.

■ Praying for the spiritual status of unbelieving acquaintances.

■ Setting aside time for prayer of any kind.

McConnell noted that Obeying God and Denying Self is the only one of the eight attributes of discipleship that was predicted by more frequent worship attendance. "Many people think of obeying God as something they must do on their own. However, it's clear through the research findings

that the teaching, encouragement, and accountability of corporate worship have a direct impact on obedience."

The findings on obeying God and denying self are part of the largest discipleship study of its kind. Results from each of the eight attributes of spiritual maturity will continue to be released over the coming months.

To help pastors, churches and individuals measure spiritual development, LifeWay Research used the study's data to develop a questionnaire for believers, called the Transformational Discipleship Assessment (TDA). This online evaluation delivers both individual and group reports on spiritual maturity using the eight factors of biblical discipleship.

The TDA also provides helpful and practical suggestions on appropriate next steps for spiritual development. To learn more about the Transformational Discipleship research, visit LifeWayResearch.com. The TDA is available at TDA.LifeWay.com.

Methodology: The survey of 2,930 American adults who attend a Protestant church once a month or more was conducted Oct. 14-22, 2011. A demographically balanced online panel was used for the interviewing. Respondents could respond in English, Spanish or French. The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed plus or minus 1.8%. Margins of error are higher in subgroups.

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Kelley

cont. from p.2

when they raise their children in the same way they were raised. Why? Parental love drives their decisions, too.

As we learn more and more of Christ, our prayers begin to reflect more and more of His priorities. When you are praying for what you know God wants to do, you rejoice in the certainty He will hear and He will respond to prayers in the direction He is already going.

Pray for our nation in this election season, and stand in the Gospel. Pray knowing that

God loves every man and woman, boy and girl in this nation. Pray knowing that our needs all matter to our Heavenly Father. Pray knowing the Father's priority: He wants America to be a nation that will honor Him and follow His ways.

Pray knowing that religious liberty is one of the most crucial freedoms we have, allowing all to follow the dictates of their conscience before God. Pray knowing that leaders do matter. When we decide whom to follow, we are deciding our destination!

Kelley is president of New Orleans Seminary.

Glorieta

cont. from p.1

for houses and conference facilities;

■ "Permission for LifeWay to continue using Glorieta for summer camps;

■ "Accommodation of use by New Mexico Baptists;

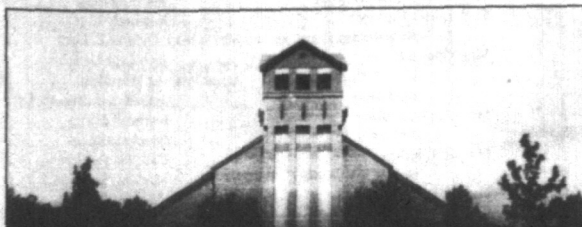
■ "Preservation of memorials associated with rooms and structures; and

■ "Prohibition of re-selling the facilities in the future without LifeWay's permission."

Any sale also would require approval of LifeWay's board of trustees.

Correction:

► In the Oct. 18, 2012, edition of The Baptist Record, page 8, the 2012 State Speakers' Tournament Winners, At-Large Division, are, from left, William McCrary, III; Aaron Aslom; and Rebecca Vanderford. The Baptist Record regrets the error.



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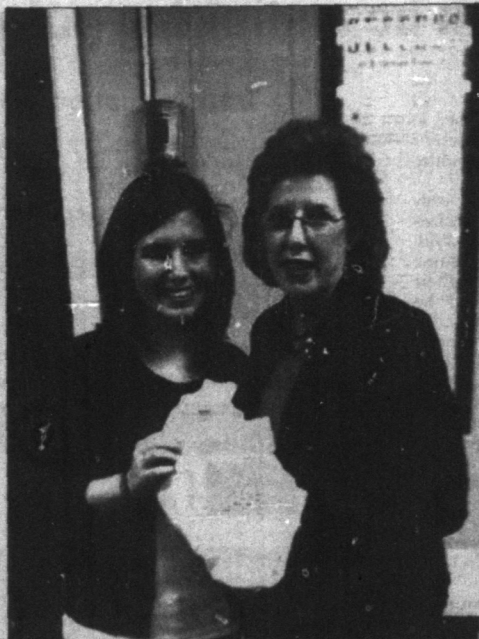
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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.



(AT LEFT) Mrs. Chrystelle Thames, BCV Director of Public Relations, accepts a donation of \$559.50 from Kaci Simpson, President of Fellowship of Christian Athletes at Cleveland High School. Simpson organized the Walk/Run and with the support of the students at Cleveland High School was able to give a generous gift to The Baptist Children's Village. (AT RIGHT) Luke Padgett was introduced to The Baptist Children's Village ministry by his grandfather through a visit to one of The BCV campuses. Because of that experience, Padgett, a Junior at North Delta School and member of Student Venture, organized a fundraiser event to benefit the ministry. The event, Thursday, November 1, 2012, will include a student/faculty basketball game and a Wal-Mart gift card raffle. Padgett is pictured with Mrs. Chrystelle Thames, BCV Director of Public Relations, who had the opportunity to share with the students about the work of The Baptist Children's Village during a recent chapel service.

OCTOBER 2012

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OCTOBER 2012

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Warren
Sue Hamilton
Rev. & Mrs. James P.
Allen
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy W.
Hardy
Allie Fullerton
Mr. & Mrs. Everett
Stafford
Marcella "Marcy" Gann
James Yopp
*Geneva Gardner

Bobby Gardner
100812
Bill George
Warren & Becky
Strickland
Mr. Gene Gilbow
Mike & Brenda Dean
Mr. David Griffin
Mrs. Dot Griffin &
Children
Pat Grubbs
Thomas & Dorothy
Henderson
Ada Guest
Kathy & Ben Byrd
Warren Hammett, Sr.
Kaye & Curtis
Buchanan
Drew Harrington
Jackie, Carolyn &
Jordan Wooley
Mrs. Lottie Harvey
Ed & Joann Bommer
Mrs. Eileen Hasel
Kaye & Curtis
Buchanan
Mr. Charlie Hearon
Jimmy & Jo Jenkins
Mrs. Phil Hilton
Bob & Jean Taylor
Helen Hollingshead
Warren & Becky
Strickland
Marcelle & Gladys
Hollingsworth
Ms. Sharon Wicker
Douglas Howton
Kolola Springs BC
Mrs. Minnie Hudson
FBC New Augusta
Ma. Gene Hughes
Camden BC
Jeremy & Renee
Williams
Rebecca "Becky" Jefcoat
Mr. & Mrs. Frank
Turner

Mrs. Faye Jordan
FBC Hazlehurst
Betty Jones
Ms. Bettye T.
Weissinger
Judy Kerley
Herman & Sharon
Dungan
Matthew Kirk
Brian, Teri & Walker
Manning
Paul Cwain Klepzig
Martha H. Klepzig
Mr. Willie James Lackey
Mrs. Dot Shaw
Mrs. Joanne C. Langston
Margie Langston
Mr. Buford I. mley
Mary Malone
Valeria Little
Ms. Birtie M.
Kennedy
Mr. & Mrs. Orland L. Lott
Ann Lott Denton
Anne Walker Manning
Jack & Sandra Fowler
Karen & Harry
Dieckmann
Carlis & Pat Lyon
Martha Huggins
Beth Potin Marshall
Kaye & Curtis
Buchanan
James Martin
Tinsley BC
Virginia Martin
Tinsley BC
Brenda McCall
Percy & Hilda Peeler
Mr. Bubba McClain
Larry & Frances
Cooley
Major McDaniel
Mr. & Mrs. Paul D.
Allen
Larry & Frances
Cooley

Living in Humility • 1 Peter 5:1-14

Today's Scripture deals with a word that holds the solution to most church problems — **humility**. Most unresolved conflicts are the result of selfish and sinful pride. **Humility** is deferring your rights and putting others before yourself.

Peter gives instructions regarding humility to three distinct groups in the church.

1. ELDERS

"To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: (v. 1, NIV).

"Elders" has a double meaning in the New Testament. In the earliest days, one or more men were appointed in every church to provide leadership and pastoral care. They were usually the most mature men of the church. In time the word "elder" became synonymous with "pastor" and age was not as much a factor as spiritual maturity. Baptists today recognize the two offices of pastor (elder) and deacon as outlined in 1 Tim. 3:1-13.

Here Peter gives specific instructions to those who lead the church:

1. *Be Shepherds of God's Flock (v. 2a)* - Pastors, staff, and all who "lead" the church are called to be shepherds. Shepherds feed the flock by teaching God's Word publicly and on an individual basis. Shepherds also protect the flock from wandering out of God's

will and attacks of false doctrine.

2. *Serving as Overseers (v. 2b)* - Overseer carries the idea of the person in charge; the person looking out for the benefit of the whole flock. A pastor's role is to interact with all staff, church council, deacons and committees and guide the church in a way that it is healthy and balanced. Humility among church members requires that they understand when they want to pursue a specific type of ministry that it must fit into the overall plan and budget of the church.

3. *Not lording it over...but being examples to the flock (v. 3)* - A healthy church is one in which leaders lead with a spirit of humility, and members follow with the same spirit. Godly pastors don't demand what they want from the church, nor do godly church members resist their pastors in ways that they have to demand anything. Pastors and leaders are to set the tone for the church by being examples of humility.

2. YOUNGERS

"Young men, in the same way be

submissive to those who are older (v. 5, NIV).

How many church wars could have been avoided if those of different generations had acted in mutual humility! Elder members are called to be humble, open, and considerate of the younger generation and their needs. But younger members here are here

com-manded by God to "be sub-missive to those who are older." That means to respect their needs

and opinions, to heed their warnings, and don't try to force them into anything.

Churches don't prosper when one group tries to force something on another group. Most growing churches are successfully blending the interests of all generations in a spirit of humility. They embrace a mixture of styles of music, dress, and ministries that meet the needs of all members and the unchurched around them.

3. ALL

"All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, be-

cause, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble'...Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (v. 5, 8 NIV).

The church has become the front line in the war between God and Satan in America. Satan's attack on the church is not as much from forces on the outside as it is from forces within its membership. If he can get older and younger members engaged in battles with each other over music, dress, schedules, or anything else that has no eternal significance, he can devour our loved ones in the process. How? Because when Christians are busy fighting one another, they abandon the true battle for the souls of men, women, boys and girls. God is not happy with that.

Greet one another with a kiss of love (v. 14, NIV).

This verse describes how all Christians of all generations and backgrounds ought to greet one another. If we truly want to glorify God in our lifetimes, and leave a Christian legacy for future generations, we need to lay aside our sinful pride and the selfish desires that divide us. We need to humbly focus on meeting the needs of others rather than our own.

Bishop is a member of Harrisburg Church, Tupelo.



Explore the Bible

with David B. Bishop

Pray with Dependency • Acts 4:23-31

Prayer is how we communicate our thoughts with God. How good is our understanding of this two-way street? Our culture is in a maelstrom in the social, political, and moral bailiwick. Acts 4:1-31 gives us a powerful story of Peter and John praying after being seized and brought before rulers, elders, and teachers of the law (Sanhedrin) in Jerusalem. There also was Annas, the high priest, and Caiaphas, John, Alexander, et al, the same council of religious leaders who pressed Pilate to crucify Jesus. In order to stave off riots in the community, Peter and John were asked "By what power or name did you heal that lame man? Peter's answer (V 10 NIV Study Bible) "...know this, you and all Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands healed before you."

Their answer overwhelmed the pomp and elitist arrogance of the rulers. They lost their gainsay, and were unable to face down Peter and John. I'd say they were terrified and were only able to sputter a demand to stop speaking in the name of Jesus. A real encounter with Jesus always glows and their reply "for we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" began the New Testament Church. They were released and went back to their own

people (the other apostles) and reported their encounter. Then significantly they raised their voices together and prayed.

Note they had previously been taught to pray because in Luke 11 they had ASKED Jesus to teach them. He did, and they were enabled to imitate Him. We're encouraged to be frequent and instant with our praying. He puts proper words in our mouth, and gives us guidelines of wisdom, rules, a model if you will, not to be bound by those exact words, but to use as a form and a directory.

The evidence of their prayers heard and answered came in a powerful form - a house shaking earth quake. They were granted the power to speak with boldness they had not had before, and they became filled with the Holy Ghost more than ever. We are shown a way to live in actual dependence upon the grace of God according to what each day requires. Here was a fresh filling, a renewed awareness of the Spirit's

power and presence in their life, an unused endowment from a never ending source.

There is a need to be anointed with fresh oil upon every new occasion. Dependence is a learned procedure and here in this shared grace we learn to live well and have our being. This new church kept right on growing by leaps and bounds and finally included even priests from the opposition ranks.

It is incumbent on all of us to seek the gift, ask for it, get it, use it, and then go back and ask for more. Talents are to be passed around, traded, increased, not buried under a bushel. What if the apostles had not prayed and asked God for guidance? How many opportunities of healing, enhancement, success do we miss by putting prayers off until a more convenient time?

Note in Acts 5:15 Peter was so empowered that people brought their sick to him if only to just lie in his shadow. Was he perfect? No, but he was secure

in Christ and he knew it. He continued to be teachable, humble and close to the Holy Spirit, growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord.

As a community of believers, we can experience God's enrichment in our lives, and strive to pass it on. Begin to pray often, alone and/or in groups. Life teaches us through situations, scenarios, trials, etc. how to participate in His plan. God's will may not be to make our situations easier by softening up our circumstances, (make us "happy campers"), but to strengthen us, humble us, and make us more effective for Him in future experiences.

We learn from Peter's story never to shrink from a fully surrendered life. Puritans had a phrase "the same sun that melts wax also can harden clay". We can allow God to soften us or resist and become hard as stone. Expect something, even an earth quake, when we pray according to his will. Expect a stirring from God for every prayer we offer to Him, and become enabled to share the gospel news. Remember in our October lesson the Samaritan woman at the well was unable to keep quiet about the good news she received? (Okay, this lesson sounds preachy, sorry.)

Gibson is a member of Monticello Church, Monticello.

Bible Studies for Life

with Evelyn Gibson



Just for the Record



BEULAH CHURCH, DECATUR, recognized members who had perfect attendance in Sunday School for the 2011 - 12 church year. Front row: Laverne Chaney, Barbara J. Harrison, Makayla Williams, Mary Ann Kelly, and Nathan Kelly; back row, Billy Williams, Hailey Snowden, Gary Pinson, Judy Pinson, Will Motley, Neri Motley, and Elton Bryan.



CUMBERLAND CHURCH, MABEN, ordained Chase Owen to the ministry Oct. 14. Shown are Jay Parks, Owen, Donnie Buckner, and Ken White.



WOOLMARKET CHURCH, BILOXI, ordained Jay Paul Cook and Thomas Williams as deacons Oct. 7. Shown are Cook, Williams, and pastor Paul Crowley.

GRACE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH, LEXINGTON, honored pastor Jack Manor for his spiritual leadership Oct. 17 with a fellowship meal and a shawl from India. He is shown being prayed for by the men of the church.



EDWARDS CHURCH, EDWARDS, recently ordained Wilkins H. Montgomery, III, as deacon. Shown are pastor Jimmy Barrentine and Montgomery.



FAITH CHURCH, MERIDIAN, licensed Joe Burt Cade, Jr., to the gospel ministry Nov. 13, 2011. He is shown with Dano Rainer.



NORTH UNION CHURCH, ATTALA ASSOCIATION, recently dedicated their new digital piano, and recognized pianist Wayma Armstrong, who has only missed one Sunday in the 11 years she has served. She is shown with pastor Ladell Blanton.



FIRST CHURCH, CHICORA, recognized its Mission Friends Aug. 26.